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Chapter No. 462
19/HR43/R412SG
CST / CB

HOUSE BILL NO. 150

Originated in House



Clerk

HOUSE BILL NO. 150

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-71, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE LOAN FORGIVENESS TO INDIVIDUALS PROVIDING INSTRUCTIONAL OR CLINICAL SERVICE AS A LICENSED DYSLLEXIA THERAPIST IN A PUBLIC OR ELIGIBLE NONPUBLIC SCHOOL FOR THE MISSISSIPPI DYSLLEXIA FORGIVABLE LOAN PROGRAM; TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-57, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT AWARDS GRANTED UNDER THE WILLIAM WINTER TEACHER FORGIVABLE LOAN PROGRAM SHALL BE AVAILABLE TO NONTRADITIONAL LICENSED TEACHERS UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. Section 37-106-71, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-106-71. (1) There is established the Mississippi Dyslexia Education Forgivable Loan Program for the purpose of identifying and recruiting qualified university and college students from the state for schooling in education with a focus on dyslexia therapy.

(2) The receipt of a forgivable loan under the program shall be solely limited to those students who are enrolled in or who have been accepted for enrollment into a master's degree program of study for dyslexia therapy at any public or private institution

of higher learning within the State of Mississippi at the time an application for a forgivable loan is filed with the board.

(3) The annual amount of the forgivable loan award shall be equal to the total cost for tuition, materials and fees at the college or university in which the student is enrolled. Awards made to nonresidents of the state shall not include any amount assessed by the college or university for out-of-state tuition.

(4) Upon completion of the master's program and licensure requirements, a forgivable loan recipient who has not been previously licensed by the State Department of Education shall render service in an instructional or clinical capacity as a licensed * * * dyslexia * * * therapist in a public school district in the state or an eligible nonpublic school as defined by Section 37-173-1 and meets the criteria established in Section 37-173-17, not to exceed five (5) recipients rendering instructional or clinical services in a nonpublic school at any time.

(5) Repayment and conversion terms shall be the same as those outlined in Section 37-106-53.

(6) The board shall prepare and submit a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2015, and annually thereafter, outlining in detail the number of participants who have received forgivable loans under the program, the record of service provided by those recipients as they transition out of the degree program into the public school districts of this state, and the projection for

expanding the program to include more participants annually as determined by the need for such qualified professionals in the public school setting. Additionally, the report shall include a summary of allocations and expenditures for the administration of the program and the total amount of funds issued to recipients of forgivable loans from the inception of the program until such time as the report has been prepared and submitted to the Legislature.

(7) The Mississippi Dyslexia Education Forgivable Loan Program shall be administered in the same manner as the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program established under Section 37-106-55 and shall be incorporated into the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program for all purposes.

(8) Funding for the establishment and continued operation of the Mississippi Dyslexia Education Forgivable Loan Program shall be administered by the board through a special fund established within the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program. The board may accept and receive monetary gifts and donations from any source, public or private, which such funds shall be deposited in the special fund for the benefit of the Mississippi Dyslexia Education Forgivable Loan Program with the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program.

(9) No more than twenty (20) students per cohort shall be selected annually to be admitted into the program for receipt of forgivable loans beginning with the 2013-2014 academic year. However, forgivable loans awarded under the program shall be

provided only to students who have been accepted into a Dyslexia Therapy Master's Degree Cohort Program approved by the State Department of Education that provides instructional training as required under Chapter 173, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972, for dyslexia therapy in preparation of those cohort students for AA licensure by the department.

(10) As part of the Mississippi Dyslexia Education Forgivable Loan Program, the State Department of Education is authorized and directed, subject to the availability of funds specifically appropriated therefor by the Legislature, to provide financial assistance for the recruitment, placement and employment of qualified licensed dyslexia therapy professionals identified under Section 37-173-15(1)(b), Mississippi Code of 1972, in order to provide dyslexia screening, evaluation and therapy services to the students attending school in the school district. Said funding may be used to purchase curriculum materials and supplies for dyslexia therapy services. Said funding shall be provided to public school districts upon application therefor regardless of the financial need of the school district in an amount not to exceed Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) annually, and subject to specific appropriation therefor by the Legislature. In order to qualify for such funds, the school district shall meet the following criteria:

(a) Use licensed dyslexia therapists or individuals participating in an approved training program resulting in State

Department of Education licensure to provide dyslexia therapy to students diagnosed with dyslexia;

(b) Use daily Orton-Gillingham-based therapy;

(c) Have school leadership trained in dyslexia; and

(d) Have a current School Program Verification and Assurances form on file with the State Department of Education, Office of Curriculum and Instruction. Procedures and standards for the application for such funds shall be established by regulations developed and issued by the State Board of Education.

SECTION 2. Section 37-106-57, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-106-57. (1) It is the intention of the Legislature to attract and retain qualified teachers by awarding incentive loans to persons declaring an intention to serve in the teaching field and who actually render service to the state while possessing an appropriate teaching license.

(2) There is established the "William F. Winter Teacher Forgivable Loan Program."

(3) Subject to the availability of funds, students who are enrolled in any baccalaureate degree-granting institution of higher learning in the State of Mississippi that is regionally accredited and approved by the board and who have expressed in writing a present intention to teach in Mississippi shall be eligible for student loans to be applied to the costs of their college education. Persons who have been admitted to a teacher

education program or a nontraditional teacher internship licensure program authorized under Section 37-3-2(6)(b), as approved by the State Board of Education, shall also qualify for loans at approved institutions. The board shall provide that teacher education majors and noneducation majors shall have equal access to forgivable loans under authority of this section.

(4) A junior establishing initial eligibility shall be eligible for a maximum of two (2) annual loans and a senior shall be eligible for one (1) annual loan.

(5) The maximum annual loan shall be set by the board at an amount not to exceed the cost of attendance at any baccalaureate degree-granting institution of higher learning in the State of Mississippi. However, it is the intent of the Legislature that the maximum annual loan amounts under the William F. Winter Teacher Forgivable Loan Program shall not be of such amounts that would compete with the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program.

(6) The loans of persons who actually render service as licensed teachers or nontraditional teacher interns authorized under Section 37-3-2(6)(b) in a public school, including a charter school, in Mississippi for a major portion of the school day for at least seventy-eight (78) school days shall be converted to interest-free scholarships. Repayment and conversion terms shall be the same as those outlined in Section 37-106-53.

(7) Awards granted under the William F. Winter Teacher Forgivable Loan Program shall be made available to nontraditional licensed teachers showing a documented need for student loan repayment and employed in those school districts designated by the State Board of Education as a geographical area of the state or in a subject area of the curriculum in which there is a critical shortage of teachers. Repayment and conversion terms shall be the same as outlined in Section 37-106-53 except that the maximum annual amount of this repayment should not exceed Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00) and the maximum time period for repayment shall be no more than four (4) years.

(* * *8) Failure to repay any loan and interest that becomes due shall be cause for the revocation of a person's teaching license by the State Department of Education.

(* * *9) The board shall promulgate regulations necessary for the proper administration of this section.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2019.

PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
March 28, 2019


SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PASSED BY THE SENATE
March 28, 2019


PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR


GOVERNOR

April 16, 2019 9:55 Am